



MANAGE Bulletin

From the National Institute of Agricultural Extension Management

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ICTs for Effective Delivery of Agricultural Information National Workshop

The Information and Communication Technology (ICT) revolution has begun to make its impact in delivery of agricultural information. A large number of projects have been grounded by public sector, private sector and under public-private partnership. Time has come now to consolidate the lessons and share best practices for effective delivery of agricultural information to the farmers.

Keeping this in view MANAGE organized a National Workshop during December 8-9, 2011 on "Use of ICTs for Effective Delivery of Agricultural Information".

The objectives were:

- to share and consolidate the lessons learnt from various ICT interventions in agricultural extension;
- share best practices at the grassroots
- analyze specific needs of content and functional literacy to empower kiosk managers to disseminate knowledge on social and agricultural issues; work out strategies to bridge the knowledge gap and bring benefits of ICTs to the rural communities;
- suggest possible areas of intervention at various levels to improve the quality, credibility and timely availability of agricultural information to the farmers.

Dr. M. Moni, Deputy Director General, NIC in his inaugural address focused on the need for an agriculture governance system, documentation of the role of ICT in all aspects be it crop farming, dairy farming, poultry, fisheries and allied areas, need for an agricultural resource information system and a comprehensive village information system, need for problem related, target audience wise, commodity wise content in the local language, and related aspects.



Participants at the Workshop

The workshop focused on ICT applications in Agro Advisory services, Mobile Phone based Farmer Advisory services, Expert Systems, Knowledge Management initiatives in Agriculture, Weather based information and advisory services, Mass Media application, Community Radio, AGRISNET initiatives by states etc.

Summing up the deliberations, Dr VP Sharma, Director (ITDP) emphasized on the following areas:

- the need to network all Agro-Advisory based initiatives to create a common Farmers' Portal, for a single point access to all government schemes, programmes, facilities, research, development and marketing information.
- Make web information far more specific with details of concerned departments, agencies and officers.
- Upscale Community Radio initiatives and mobile based agro advisory pilots
- Thirty-eight participants at the workshop represented national agricultural institutions, Department of Agriculture, SAUs and KVKs from across the country.

Public Private Partnership for Agricultural Development

Public Private Partnership in agricultural development has been gaining momentum as it subscribes to the merits of both the public and private systems. Several steps have been taken to support this policy initiative viz., amendment in the APMC act and marketing reforms, legal status to contract farming, establishment of ATMA as an instrument of institutional reforms etc.

Programmes on the theme were planned with the objective of orienting to the concept of Public Private Partnership; share existing Public-Private Partnership (PPP) models in agricultural development and the

process which make these models successful; consolidate and evolve suitable Public-Private Partnership models for specific application in State Projects.

One programme was organized during December 7-9, 2011 at Lucknow wherein 25 senior functionaries of Agriculture and Extension Department, Marketing Department, Farmers Organizations, Cooperatives, Agri-Business Companies, NGOs, Public and Private Financial Institutions and other Agriculture Extension Service Providers participated.

Effective Communication



Working in Groups

The challenge for extension specialists is to encapsulate technological innovations into clearly understandable practices for farmers. This necessitates effective communication skills to interact with various stake holders in agricultural extension.

Focusing on this component, two programmes were planned to orient participants to various styles of communication; enable them to sharpen skills on different types of communication; and help them to identify the barriers and bridges of communication.

Modules focused on various elements of communication, presentation skills, inter personal communication, communication styles, writing skills, transactional analysis, importance of feedback etc.

One programme was organized during December 19-23, 2011. Twenty eight Senior and middle level officials from agriculture, horticulture, veterinary, fisheries, sericulture and other allied departments, scientists from research institutes and State Agricultural Universities from different states participated in the programme.

Mainstreaming Gender Concerns in Agriculture

The National Agriculture Policy (NAP) accords high priority to recognition and mainstreaming of women's role in agriculture. Appropriate measures have been initiated to empower women and build their capacities and improve their access to inputs such as land, credit and agricultural technologies. As men and women may not automatically benefit from development activities but may remain excluded, there is a need for gender sensitizing the extension machinery in the country.

Programmes for Mainstreaming Gender Concerns were planned during 2011-12 with the following objectives:

- building awareness and sensitivity on gender and related concepts;
- enhancing the capacity of the functionaries to understand and analyze gender issues in agriculture and allied sectors; and
- equip the functionaries with practical tools and strategies for addressing gender issues in their respective sectors.
- Focus of the modules was on gender analysis tools and techniques, gender equity, gender budgeting, strategies for mainstreaming gender concerns at various levels in different sectors and related aspects.

One programme was organized during December 12-16, 2011 for 30 participants including senior and middle level extension functionaries from the State Departments of agriculture and allied sectors, scientists of SAUs, ICAR institutes, NGOs etc.

Training on Participatory Extension Management

Reforms in extension focus on a decentralized, innovative institutional set-up, broad based extension delivery mechanism consistent with farming systems approach, public private partnership, group approach and formation of FIGs and Farmers Federations,

mainstreaming gender, convergence of programmes, ultimately moving towards sustainability of the extension services, through beneficiary contribution.

This makes it imperative to build the capacity of the developmental functionaries in the above areas so that they can perform their role as extension managers, effectively.

One programme was organized on Participatory Extension Management during December 26-30, 2011 to orient developmental functionaries on reforms in extension; familiarize them with the process of preparation of a participatory action plan; and sensitize them to the need for a group approach, gender mainstreaming, public private partnership etc, for effective extension management.

There were 41 participants representing State Departments of Agriculture and allied sectors, SAUs, NGOs etc.

Promotion of Commodity Interest Groups and Federations

Various experiences under different projects indicate that group approaches have been followed as a strategy for technology dissemination. Interventions are being implemented keeping groups in focus under extension reforms. These groups could bring in the benefits of risk minimisation, resource pooling, timely access to inputs, negotiation with service providers, market forces etc. Adopting this approach has helped in exploring new areas and enterprises, which would otherwise, not have been possible on the part of an individual farmer. Apart from the benefit to the farmers, the delivery system has also found this approach effective in building their capacity and to work out a mechanism to address the farmer's needs.

In this context, there is an urgent need for capacity building of different stakeholders on formation and management of Commodity Interest Groups (CIGs) and Federations under extension reforms. The personnel need to be exposed on various methodologies of the group approach as well as management processes and strategies. Besides, they need to have an insight into the involvement of these groups in agriculture and allied sector development, in addition to the monitoring of progress and managerial skills for sustainable development of farmers organizations.

In view of this, one programme was organized on Promotion of Commodity Interest Groups (CIGs) and Federations during December 19-23, 2011, at MANAGE .

The overall objective of the programme was to build the capacity of the participants on the process involved in formation and management of CIGs and their federations. The specific objectives were:

- To orient participants to the steps in forming and managing CIGs and their federations under extension reforms,
- To orient them on various components relating to input and output management and develop a mechanism for preparation of action plan through CIGs.
- To help them gain experience in process monitoring and sustainability of CIGs and federations.
- Participants represented Departments of Agriculture, Animal Husbandry, Fisheries and Marketing.



Remote Sensing and GIS in Agricultural Development

ICTs are being used extensively in all aspects of Agricultural Education, Research and Extension. Advanced tools like Geographical Information Systems (GIS) and Global Positioning Systems (GPS) are also being effectively used to delineate Watersheds and also to identify water sources and in monitoring soil health etc. GIS technology can also be applied to more precisely assess crop health, crop growth and also crop losses, to assist implementation of Agriculture Insurance. Appropriate use of GIS tools can also provide advance estimates of various crops and their production potential to planners and policy makers. To promote awareness of GIS technologies and to facilitate their appropriate application, a training programme was organized at MANAGE during December 19-23, 2012.

There were 22 participants from the Department of

Agriculture and line departments, SAUs, KVKs and NGOs.

Objectives

- To sensitize extension officers, scientists about the use of Remote Sensing and GIS application in agricultural development and
- upgrade their skills in satellite remote sensing and GIS applications in agriculture to make best use of these technologies.

Focus was on various aspects of Satellite, Remote Sensing and GIS, Digital image processing and digital analysis of satellite data, fundamentals of GIS, Geo-positioning Systems and spatial data analysis and application of remote sensing and GIS in weather forecasting, agro advisory services, soil health and degradation assessment.

Training Programmes March 2012

Sno.	Programme	Dates	Venue
1.	Participatory Monitoring and Evaluation	March 5-9	MANAGE
2.	Programme on Mass Media Support for Agricultural Extension : Development and Management of Agricultural Programs for Radio and Television	March 5-9	Coimbatore, Tamil Nadu
3.	National Consultation on "Promotion of Agri Entrepreneurship under Extension Reforms"	March 6-8	MANAGE
4.	Farm Mechanization Extension	March 12-14	MANAGE
5.	Management Development Programme for JK Trust	March 12-16	MANAGE
6.	National Consultation on "Innovations in Agricultural Extension under RKVY"	March 13-15	MANAGE
7.	Training cum Workshop on Applications of ICTs in Modified Extension Reforms Scheme	March 19-21	Maharashtra
8.	Process Documentation	March 19-23	MANAGE
9.	Workshop-cum Training on Kisan Call Centre	March 26	MANAGE
10.	ICT tools for NTIs	March 26-27	MANAGE
11.	Watershed programme for the officials of Tamil Nadu	March 26-30	MANAGE

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MANAGE BULLETIN is published by:

Shri. Sanjeev Gupta, IAS, Director General,
National Institute of Agricultural
Extension Management (MANAGE)
Rajendranagar, Hyderabad-500030, India.
Tel:+91 (0) 40 24016702-706 Fax:+91 (0) 40 24015388

Chief Editor: Shri Sanjeev Gupta, I.A.S.

Executive Editor : Dr. V.P. Sharma

Editor: Dr. Lakshmi Murthy